



CAROLINA CONNECTIONS

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

NATIONAL FORESTS IN NORTH CAROLINA SEASONAL UPDATE SUMMER 2012

1 *Staying Safe & New Supervisor*

2 **Croatan National Forest**

3 **Nantahala National Forest**

Cheoah Ranger District

Nantahala Ranger District

Tusquitee Ranger District

4 **Pisgah National Forest**

Appalachian Ranger District

Grandfather Ranger District

Pisgah Ranger District

5 **Uwharrie National Forest**

6 *Staying Safe & New Supervisor (cont'd from page 1)*

Staying Safe this Summer—Know Before You Go

Welcome to the national forests in North Carolina, where visitors participate in an array of recreational activities. Summer is the busiest time of year in the Nantahala, Pisgah, Uwharrie, and Croatan National Forests. Every year, millions of people flock to these popular destinations during the warm months to soak up some sun, relax with family and friends, and enjoy the great outdoors.

“With the amount of activity in the national forests and the unpredictability of nature, accidents can occur quickly,” said Delce Dyer, recreation program manager for the National Forests in North Carolina. “We encourage visitors and employees to practice safety at all times to prevent accidents from happening.”

Flash Floods

Visitors to the Nantahala, Pisgah, and Uwharrie National Forests in North Carolina should be aware of the danger of flash flooding. The National Weather Service describes a flash flood as a rapid rise of water in a low-lying area, usually caused by

an intense storm that produces heavy rainfall in a short amount of time. Rising flood waters can roll boulders and vehicles, tear out trees, destroy bridges and undermine roads. A low-lying area can become extremely dangerous in a matter of minutes. The best defense is to be weather-ready before a storm hits.

Follow these safety practices to avoid flash floods:

- Safety is your own responsibility whenever you head outdoors.
- Families should discuss how they would alert each other and get to a safe zone if rushing or rising water, or any other emergency, interrupts their trip.
- When visiting a forest, be alert for heavy rains and sudden changes in weather.
- Recreating or camping near a stream or river can be a risk if there are thunderstorms in the area.
- Flash floods can occur with little or no warning.

(cont'd on page 6)

Bail Appointed Forest Supervisor

Kristin Bail was recently appointed the new forest supervisor of the National Forests in North Carolina. Bail previously served as deputy forest supervisor on the Coconino National Forest in Arizona. In accepting the forest supervisor position,

she is returning to a part of the country she loves.

“I am honored to have the opportunity to live and work in the beautiful mountains and coast of North Carolina,” said Bail. “I look forward to working with our forest employees, our state and

local partners, and the conservation community to care for these diverse and special National Forests.”

As forest supervisor, Bail is responsible for overseeing management of the Nantahala, Pisgah, Uwharrie, and Croatan National

(cont'd on page 6)

Kicking Back along the Coast

Summer is a great time to visit the Croatan National Forest, one of four national forests in North Carolina and the only true coastal forest in the East. Bordered on three sides by tidal rivers and the Bogue Sound, the forest is defined by salt and fresh waters. The 110-mile Saltwater Adventure Trail, which begins at Brice Creek and ends at Dixon Field, is just one way to enjoy the water.

Neuse River/Flanners Beach

Located along the Neuse River, the Neuse River/Flanners Beach Recreation Area offers a wide array of recreational opportunities and amenities. This year, visitors will find improvements including a recently constructed bathroom. In addition, the Forest Service replaced the sewer treatment plant with an underground septic system. The new system is better for the environment and saves money. Flanners Beach offers summer visitors camping, picnicking and hiking opportunities.

Boating Opportunities

Boating is a fun way to cool off and enjoy the waterways of the Croatan National Forest. The following boat-launching areas are popular because of their natural beauty and easy access to water: Brice Creek, Catfish Lake, Great Lake, Siddie Fields, Cahooque Creek, Cedar Point, Haywood Landing, Long Point and Oyster Point. Brice Creek and Haywood Landing fishing piers are fully accessible.

Cedar Point

Cedar Point is another popular destination during the warmer months. The recreation area offers camping, picnicking, fishing, boating and hiking. Open year-round, the campground offers more than 40 sites with electrical hookups, a bathhouse with flush toilets, warm showers, drinking water and a ramp for shallow-water boats. Picnic tables are nearby. There is a small fee for camping, and all sites are fully accessible. Cedar Point, now in the www.recreation.gov reservation system, has six first-come, first-served sites.

The Cedar Point Tideland Trail crosses boardwalks to explore the salt marsh and the life above and beneath.

Horseback Riding

Equestrians visiting the Croatan National Forest this summer will enjoy a new 14-mile trail. The trail, constructed near the Pinecliff Area, was developed through a partnership with the state and several horse groups including Reins and Bits.

Prescribed Burning

Summer is also a time when staff at the Croatan National Forest may conduct prescribed burning. Prescribed burns help promote the growth of native longleaf pine trees, and they benefit wildlife such as the endangered red-cockaded woodpecker. Prescribed burning reduces the build-up of woody debris, helps prevent a catastrophic fire and protects the community surrounding the national forest. The Croatan National Forest is among the locations where the Forest Service is working to restore the longleaf pine tree to its native range in the South.

Checking for Ticks

Summer at the Croatan can include ticks that may carry of diseases such as Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever and Lyme disease. Follow these safety tips to prevent tick bites:

- Wear light-colored clothing so ticks are visible on clothing.
- Tuck pant legs into socks so ticks cannot crawl inside pants.
- Apply repellents to discourage tick attachment.
- Avoid tall grass and brush.
- Routinely check hair and body for ticks. Go to a doctor immediately if there is redness, and take the tick in a plastic bag for identification.

Cheoah Ranger District

Visitors should note that Wolf Laurel Road will be closed until mid-October as improvements are made to the road. The project will enhance fish habitat by replacing two culverts, while performing other road repairs. Working with partner Eastern Brook Trout Joint Venture, the Forest Service is improving passage for trout spawning upstream. Hikers and others wishing to reach the Wolf Laurel Trailhead can park at the road closure and walk to the trailhead or access the Joyce Kilmer-Slickrock Wilderness through other trailheads. Alternate trailheads include Beech Gap, Rattler Ford,

Joyce Kilmer Road and Maple Springs.

Speaking of the Joyce Kilmer area, the Forest Service is pleased that the Partners of the Joyce Kilmer-Slickrock Wilderness has secured a grant to reduce invasive plant species and to monitor visitor usage of the well-known area.

Another very popular location in the district is Cheoah Point along Santeetlah Lake. The natural beauty is truly spectacular and well worth the trip. Summer recreational activities at Cheoah Point run the spectrum from swimming to hiking, kayaking to fishing. In addition to tent sites, a number of RV sites and two cabins can be reserved. Cheoah Point features showers, drinking water, flush toilets and nearby trails. For reservations, call 877-444-6777 or visit www.recreation.gov.

Nantahala Ranger District

Trail repairs continue at popular Dry Falls outside of Franklin, N.C. The Forest Service expects to complete the work by mid-September. When completed, the refurbished paths will enable visitors to enjoy the falls for generations to come.

Users of the Wayehutta Off-Highway Vehicle area will see improvements this summer. With a \$75,000 National Recreation Trails Program grant, the Forest Service reconstructed 13 miles of the 24-mile trail. This project was necessary to prevent siltation in the local watershed

and to protect the trail infrastructure from further resource damage. Some sections of the trail will be closed August and September 2012 as improvements continue.

Visitors who want to camp in a large group have two options in the Nantahala Ranger District: Appletree and Kimsey Creek campgrounds. Appletree and Kimsey Creek feature campsites that can accommodate up to 25 people. Located near the Appalachian Trail, Appletree has two sites that accommodate up to 50 people. To reserve a site at Appletree campground, call 828-524-6441. For Kimsey Creek, call 877-444-6777.

Tusquitee Ranger District

This summer, visitors to the Jackrabbit Mountain Recreation Area will see a number of improvements. The Jackrabbit Campground transitioned to municipal water and sewer systems, ensuring more reliable services to visitors. Also, the Forest Service installed new bathrooms and potable water at the Jackrabbit Mountain Bike and Hiking Trailhead.

The Jackrabbit Mountain Recreation Area has become one of the most popular vacation destinations in the district. Located along scenic Chatuge Lake, the area offers visitors a wide variety of rec-

reational opportunities such as hiking, boating, mountain biking, nature viewing and camping. Jackrabbit features a swimming area, and anglers can catch an array of fish in the lake including spotted, white and striped bass, as well as catfish, sun fish and crappie.

There are 100 campsites at Jackrabbit, each with a picnic table, grill and parking area. Flush toilets, showers and drinking water are available. There are also two picnic shelters and a boat launch. Campers pay a small fee to camp at Jackrabbit. For reservations, call 877-444-6777 or visit www.recreation.gov.

NANTAHALA NATIONAL FOREST

Appalachian Ranger District

Summer visitors to Roan Mountain Gardens Recreation area will see a variety of improvements to the popular area. Last year, the Forest Service re-opened the recreation area after a year-long renovation project funded by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (Recovery Act). More than \$700,000 in Recovery Act funds allowed the Forest Service to provide employment for local contractors. The project addressed a backlog of maintenance and facility needs. The renovations improved safety and the visual appeal of the popular area.

Some folks will beat the summer heat by paddling on the Nolichucky River. The Popular Boat Launch near State Route 197 allows visitors to easily put their canoes or kayaks into the majestic and scenic waterway.

Further west near Hot Springs, N.C., the Stackhouse Boat Launch gives paddlers easy access to the French Broad River. Floating or paddling on the French Broad River can be a relaxing way to cool off during the warmer months. Not far from Stackhouse Boat Launch are the Appalachian Trail and Rocky Bluff Campground. Silvermine Group Campground, also in the vicinity, has one campsite that accommodates up to 50 people. Call 877-444-6777 for reservations.

Grandfather Ranger District

The Grandfather District is home to an exciting new project called the Grandfather Restoration Project. This 10-year effort will increase prescribed burning and other management practices to more than 40,000 acres. The project will restore the fire-adapted forest ecosystems and benefit a variety of native plants and wildlife. Also the project controls non-native species and protects hemlocks against hemlock woolly adelgids. Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack announced funding for the project this year, which

could total \$4.5 million over 10 years.

Thanks to the Forest Service, travelers of the Blue Ridge Parkway this summer will notice a new sign honoring the purchase of the first tract of land under the 1911 Weeks Act. The tract was called the Burke-McDowell Tract. The plaque is located on the Blue Ridge Parkway at Laurel Knob Overlook on milepost 349.2.

Visitors should know that 12 sites in the lower part of Mortimer Campground were closed because of dangers posed by flash flooding. Eleven other sites at the campground remain open.

Pisgah Ranger District

Visitors to the Pisgah Ranger District will experience many summer treats.

Key sites throughout the district recently received significant improvements to ensure the Pisgah Ranger District continues to be a premier destination for visitors and local residents. The English Chapel Bridge, located near Davidson River Campground and originally built by the Civilian Conservation Corps, was restored. The project preserved the historic and scenic properties of the structure. There were also improvements to the ever-popular Sliding Rock Recreation Ar-

ea along the Forest Heritage National Scenic Byway, where swimmers enjoy the excitement of the Davidson River's natural boulder slide.

The district is home of the first school of forestry in the United States, now preserved at the Cradle of Forestry. Major additions to the site include a new 1.3-mile paved accessible trail, making it easy for everyone to explore the forest up close. Also, the installation of a roof over the outdoor amphitheater makes events, such as the Songcatchers Music Series, more enjoyable.

Summer at the Uwharrie

Fun at Badin Lake

Badin Lake offers summer visitors the chance to cool off from the hot temperatures in the piedmont of North Carolina.

For some folks, swimming is the best respite from the heat. There are no designated swimming beaches or areas on the Uwharrie National Forest; however, the following areas offer direct access to Badin Lake:

- Badin Lake Campground
- Cove Boat Ramp
- Kings Mountain Point Day Use Area
- Holt's Picnic Area
- Deep Water Canoe Access

Other visitors to Badin Lake prefer motorized or non-motorized boating. Cove Boat Ramp provides motorized boating access at Badin Lake. Visitors who enjoy non-motorized boats, such as canoes or kayaks, can access Badin Lake from the following locations in the Uwharrie National Forest:

- Badin Lake Campground
- Cove Boat Ramp
- Kings Mountain Point Day Use Area
- Holt's Picnic Area
- Low Water Bridge on State Route 1301
- NC Hwy 109N Bridge
- Thousand Bale Bottom on Forest Road 555

Fishing is also a popular summer pastime at Badin Lake. Anglers can try their hand at catching game fish such as largemouth bass, smallmouth bass, crappie, walleye, catfish, spotted bass, white bass and striped bass. Kings Mountain Point Day Use Area provides four accessible fishing piers along with more than 30 picnic sites and a picnic pavilion.

Trail Improvements

Visitors to the Badin Lake Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) trails this summer will notice some big improvements. Volunteers and grants from the state Recreational Trails Program provided much-needed repairs along the OHV trails. In addition, two new trail bridges were installed. Additional improvements and routes are planned for the summer and fall of 2012 with the continued help of many volunteers from the OHV clubs of North Carolina and South Carolina.

Improvements also were made to the Wood Run mountain biking area after two years of planning, surveys and preparation. The International Mountain Biking Association (IMBA), Southern Off-Road Biking Association (SORBA) and Uwharrie National Forest collaborated on the project. Volunteers and other partners (including First Bank) contributed an estimated \$200,000 worth of time and donations to IMBA, SORBA and the Uwharrie National Forest. Additionally, partnerships with Uwharrie Trail Riders Association and Back Country Horsemen of North Carolina – Uwharrie are helping with trail maintenance on the Uwharrie National Forest.

Status of Flintlock Valley Shooting Range

This summer, the Forest Service plans to begin the analysis process on the future of the Flintlock Valley Shooting Range. The three options being considered are: 1) mitigating the safety issues at the range at its current location; 2) moving the range to another location on the national forest; or 3) closing the range indefinitely.

The shooting range was closed following two reports of stray bullets. Public safety is a primary concern in all national forests, and the decision was made to temporarily close the shooting range until public safety could be assured.

UWHARRIE NATIONAL FOREST

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Staying Safe this Summer—Know Before You Go *(cont'd from page 1)*

- When a NOAA flash flood warning is issued, or the moment you realize that water is rising around you, act quickly.
- In remote areas of the forest, use of cell phones and digital data services may be limited.
- Don't jump off of waterfalls or dive in waterfall pools because of unseen objects such as logs and boulders.
- Stay out of restricted areas.

Bear Safety

When visiting a national forest, seeing a black bear can be a thrill. But if the black bear rips through your tent for a bag of chips or a tube of toothpaste, a carefree camping trip can turn deadly. Practice these simple safety tips while visiting the national forests:

Waterfall Safety

Numerous travelers visit the waterfalls of western North Carolina to marvel at their splendor. Unfortunately, some make the mistake of climbing to the top of waterfalls for a better view. This mistake can result in tragedy.

Follow these simple rules when visiting waterfalls, which include slick and slippery surfaces.

- Stay back from the edge. People have been injured, sometimes fatally, trying to get a closer look.
- Wear stable shoes and watch your footing.
- Never store food or scented items in a tent.
- Do not leave food or garbage inside fire rings, grills or around your site.
- Never leave food or coolers unattended, even in developed picnic areas.
- If bear-proof containers are not available, store food and garbage inside a hard-top vehicle or trailer.

Bail Appointed Forest Supervisor *(cont'd from page 1)*

Forests, which encompass 1.25 million acres.

Bail brings a wealth of experience gleaned from over 27 years of federal service with the Bureau of Land Management and the Forest Service in Oregon, Arizona and Washington, D.C. She has previously served in the BLM national business and fiscal resources section and as the BLM national policy and program lead for the 37 national monuments and national conservation areas.



Kristin Bail, the new forest supervisor of the National Forests in North Carolina

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